

In the Claims

Please cancel claims 1, 4-6 and 9. Previously claims 2, 3, 7, 8 and 10 were canceled.

1-10 Canceled.

11) (New) A direct reduced iron product produced from lump feed material, said lump feed material derived from naturally humid sedimentary iron ore having a microstructure consisting mainly of micropores,

the direct reduced iron product produced according to the process of:

drying the lump feed material to a temperature of about 200°C and to a water content of less than 0.5% by weight;

charging the reclaimed and dried lump feed material to a gas-based direct reduction process and thereby increasing the temperature of the feed material to more than 750°C within 30 minutes of said charging to said direct reduction process.

12) (New) The direct reduced iron product of claim 11, wherein said dried lump feed material is charged to the direct reduction process at a temperature of about 150°C.

13) (New) The direct reduced iron product of claim 11, wherein said lump feed material is reclaimed to a feed storage bin and waste off-gases are supplied to said feed storage bin to effect said drying of said lump feed material.

14) (New) The direct reduced iron product of claim 13, further comprising charging said dried lump feed material from said feed storage bin to said direct reduction process via a thermally insulated charging system.

- 15) (New) The direct reduced iron product of claim 13, wherein said waste off-gases are supplied from a reformer associated with the direct reduction.
- 16) (New) The direct reduced iron product of claim 13, wherein said waste off-gases are supplied at a temperature in excess of 300°C.
- 17) (New) The direct reduced iron product of claim 11, further comprising storing the lump feed material for a predetermined time of at least one month in an open atmosphere and thereafter reclaiming said lump feed material for said drying thereof.
- 18) (New) The direct reduced iron product of claim 11, wherein said charging of said lump feed material to said direct reduction process occurs separately to any lime-coated feed material.
- 19) (New) A direct reduced iron product produced from a lump feed material derived from a naturally humid sedimentary iron ore having a microstructure consisting mainly of micropores,

the direct reduced iron product produced according to the process of:

storing the lump feed material for a predetermined time of at least one month in an open atmosphere and thereafter reclaiming the lump feed material and drying the lump feed material to a temperature of about 200°C and to a water content of less than 0.5% by weight;

charging the said lump feed material through a thermally insulated charging system to an upper part of a gas-based direct reduction furnace and thereby increasing the temperature of the feed material to more than 750°C within 30 minutes of said charging.

20) (New) A process for producing direct reduced iron from lump feed material, said lump feed material derived from naturally humid sedimentary iron ore having a microstructure consisting mainly of micropores, said process comprising steps of:

storing the lump feed material for a predetermined time of at least one month in an open atmosphere and thereafter reclaiming the lump feed material and drying the lump feed material to a temperature of about 200°C and to a water content of less than 0.5% by weight; and

charging said lump feed material to a thermally insulated charging system to an upper part of a gas-based direct reduction furnace and increasing temperature of the feed material to more than 750°C within 30 minutes of said charging.

21) (New) The process of claim 20, wherein said dried lump feed material is charged to said direct reduction process at a temperature of about 150°C.

22) (New) The process of claim 20, wherein said lump feed material is reclaimed to a feed storage bin and waste off-gases are supplied to said feed storage bin to effect said drying of said lump feed material.

23) (New) The process of claim 22, further comprising charging said dried lump feed material from said feed storage bin to said direct reduction process via a thermally insulated charging system.

24) (New) The process of claim 22, wherein said waste off-gases are supplied from a reformer associated with said direct reduction.

25) (New) The process of claim 22, wherein said waste off-gases are supplied at a temperature in excess of 300°C.

26) (New) The process of claim 20, wherein said charging of said lump feed material occurs separately to any lime-coated feed material.